



**OKLAHOMA PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION  
BOARD MEETING  
March 14, 2013  
12:00 PM – 2:45 PM  
ROMAN NOSE STATE PARK**

**DRAFT MINUTES – 3/14/13**

**LOCATION:** Roman Nose State Park, Watonga, OK

**PRESENT:**

John Weir, OSU Extension  
Darrel Dominick, OCC/OPBA – Sec/Treasurer  
Ron Voth, OPBA  
Alva Gregory, ODWC

**ABSENT:**

Verlin Hart, Crosstimbers PBA  
Karsen Davis, Roger Mills PBA  
Paul Clark, NRCS

**Guests:**

Russell Stevens, Noble Foundation  
Bill Inman, Creek County PBA  
(Note: Both guests accepted a board seat and participated in the meeting)

**CALL TO ORDER:** John Weir called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants. No handout agenda was available.

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

Inman and Stevens were introduced.

**DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL:**

Weir led the board in review of the previous meeting minutes (11/15/13). Time was provided for review and there was no discussion. Gregory offered a first to accept the minutes as written. This was seconded by Voth. All present signified approval.

**OPBA CORRESPONDENCE REPORT:**

Dominick presented the correspondence report from 9/17/12 to 3/14/13. There were no questions.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

The financial report from 9/17/12 to 3/14/13 was presented and reviewed. An addition was added concerning check #1023(3/10/13) to DaVee CPA (federal tax filing/990-N) for \$125.00. The report provided was printed before this check was written. The financial report was explained by Dominick. Several items on it were mentioned and explained. Checks 1011, 105, and 1017 have not been cashed. These were scholarship checks to local PBAs. Dominick indicated he would follow up with these recipients to determine status. Dominick also informed the board that the OPBA's federal income tax and Oklahoma income tax filings had been completed. Voth made a first to accept the report. Gregory seconded and all approved.

**FIELD POSITION – DUTIES/CONTRACT:**

Dominick presented an OPBA Independent Contractor Agreement for a Field Position with duties. Dominick indicated this was presented so that when the PLJV grant was received Ron Voth could be hired to do the work necessary to fulfill the grant requirements. The PLJV grant has been held up due to the federal sequester. Stevens indicated the need to have anyone do a detailed report of activities. Dominick indicated that the "detailed invoice" in the agreement would probably capture this but would add the language for a report. The board indicated the need to review this further. Dominick requested board approval to move out on such an agreement as soon as the funds arrived without having to have another board meeting. Gregory provided a first and Weir a second and there was no objections.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Voth and Weir led a discussion of the January training sessions in Stillwater and Woodward. These were well attended by approximately 60 at each training session. The training was well received. Inman indicated he thought the session in Stillwater was great and the training was needed across the state. Voth led a discussion concerning the need to video Weir's presentation and place on DVDs to be distributed to PBAs. Dominick indicated this was in the planning stages and Weir said he was checking in on getting this done at OSU.

## **NEW BOARD MEMBERS:**

Weir led the discussion concerning adding new board members and making the board larger. Weir nominated Inman and Stevens for the board. Voth provided a first motion and Dominick a second. These were approved and they were welcomed by all.

## **OPBA HISTORY:**

Voth provided the new members with a detailed description of how OPBA had gotten to this point. It began with Tom Lucas, NRCS HPRC&D Coordinator, and Voth working with the Oklahoma Wildlife and Prairie Heritage Alliance and moving this group towards supporting burn association formation and a possible statewide group. These two received a Conoco-Phillips Capacity Grant and went to work. Dominick got involved and assisted in 2011 with 12 public meetings around the state in which over 1000 people attended and over 500 completed surveys in support of these efforts. Voth and Weir and others provided presentations at these meetings. This effort was a success and the beginnings of OPBA. There has been disappointment in the lack of financial support from key agencies and groups. The following have provided cash, agreements and in-kind assistance to get this going:

- The Nature Conservancy
- NRCS
- OSU-NREM
- OCC
- PLJV
- Noble Foundation
- USFWS
- HPRC&D
- OK W&PH Alliance
- ODWC (Gregory's time)
- Local PBA leaders such as Davis and Hart

## **OPBA/NOBLE FOUNDATION – SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT (SSA):**

Weir presented the proposed partnership agreement between the OPBA and Noble Foundation. The signing ceremony is scheduled for April 1, 2013 at the Prescribed Fire/Conservation Day activities. Weir discussed the positive nature of this agreement. Weir provided details. A copy of the proposed agreement was provided. Dominick indicated that the OCC had allowed him to consult with Janet Stewart, OCC Counsel, and she had reviewed and discussed aspects of it with Jeff Moen, Noble Foundation Counsel. Dominick indicated he had several items he would forward to Moen and Stevens concerning the agreement. Dominick indicated he had a phone conversation earlier in the week with Moen. Dominick asked the board to give him and Weir approval to finalize the verbiage and be ready to sign it on April 1, 2013. Inman made a first motion and Gregory seconded. The request and SSA was approved.

## **OPBA BOARD GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE:**

The OPBA/Noble Foundation SSA will require OPBA to have \$1M in general liability coverage. This has nothing at this point to do with prescribed fire liability coverage. Weir and Dominick has the application completed for the Bramlett Agency in Ardmore. This is the insurance agency the Noble Foundation works with and they have been engaged to find an underwriter for prescribed fire insurance. Dominick asked the board for approval to finalize the application, submit it and get pricing for the coverage and if the cost was \$1500 or less/year for \$1M coverage to move forward and get. If the price is more than that, Weir will communicate with the board on next steps. Stevens made a motion to support this proposed action and Inman seconded. This was approved by the board.

## **OPBA BUSINESS PLAN:**

Dominick presented a proposed OPBA business plan. This document is required for the OPBA/Noble Foundation SSA. Dominick indicated he got most of the information from previous documents such as the non-profit filing with IRS (1023 and supporting documents), PLJV grant application and current financial report. Time was given to review. Several items were discussed and involved: executive summary – target audience; how much to be burned; planned acres to burn; annual report preparation; and membership. Gregory also indicated he has a different title and it is now "LEPC Private Lands Habitat Coordinator." Dominick requested that the board give Weir and he the latitude to complete this based on review of the Noble Foundation for the SSA. Voth made the first motion to approve as requested and Inman made the second. This was approved as requested by Dominick.

## **OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:**

- Weir discussed the disappointment of not receiving the NFWF grant that had been provided to our Kansas counterparts. This would help to get "boots on the ground" in helping to organize and support local burn associations. Stevens indicated he and others at the Noble Foundation had met week before with NFWF staff. Dominick had provided Stevens with a copy of the grant application that was turned down. Stevens indicated that Mr. Buckner, Noble Foundation CEO, asked the NFWF why this grant was not approved and others like it were approved. Stevens indicated the NFWF staff indicated that the opportunity for success with this grant would happen in the future and that OPBA needed to reapply.

Weir discussed the need for the OPBA/NF partnership to be the lead on the next application. The OPBA board indicated to Stevens their appreciation for Mr. Buckner supporting this important work.

- Weir then discussed State House Bill 1868 which would change the burn ban language and make it easier to put burn bans on by removing “and” out of it. Another change was removing “half inch of rain” to “significant rain” which is subjective. This will be devastating to prescribed fire and create a safety hazard for the public by virtually eliminating prescribed fire as a key management process in the fight against invasive species and reducing fuel loads. Other impacts will be continued degradation of Oklahoma lands and wildlife habitat. Stevens indicated the need for the Noble Foundation and OPBA to fight this. Weir indicated that Representative Lisa Billy and a Representative Brooks were co-authors. OPBA board indicated willingness and need to engage others and fight this change.
- Weir indicated that he and Dominick would attend a “Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma” meeting in Oklahoma City on 3/20/13. This is to discuss partnering efforts along common ground issues and possibly “education outreach” to various parts of the public that need to be informed.
- Weir discussed the 2/19/13 “Alliance of Prescribed Burn Associations” at Arcadia Lake in Edmond. Representatives from NE, KS, OK and TX attended. This was a follow-up to a meeting held in Ft. Worth in November 2012. The purpose of this newly formed alliance is to provide a forum for discussing common ground issues and to provide each with support of key actions necessary to support prescribed fire as a natural process and economical means of land management. Weir indicated one project that will come from this alliance is the production of a brief DVD to help inform the public, county commissioners, rural fire departments, communities and the public of the need for prescribed fire and the benefits of prescribed fire. The next meeting of this group will be May 21, 2013 at Arcadia Lake.
- Voth then led a discussion about the key piece needed for success of any organization and especially local PBAs. That key piece is “active leadership” that mobilizes neighbors into utilizing prescribed fire. Without someone from OPBA going out to help get local PBAs organized and find that leadership there will be little success. The board agreed with Voth and offered examples of where activities are going well and where they are static.
- Stevens discussed additional details of the meeting with the NFWF staff. Stevens also recommended that OPBA make outreach to the passionate wildlife groups such as the NWTF and Whitetail deer groups. Getting these people involved can also create dynamic volunteers for prescribed fires.
- Weir indicated that NRCS has supported state PBAs differently and that he and Dominick were engaging with the OK NRCS to get support on the same level as KS and NE with agreements and a possible staff position dedicated to prescribed fire.
- Inman discussed the Creek County PBA efforts and that they had applied to FCC for their own frequency. Weir indicated that once they received the frequency that OPBA needed to support this as a statewide frequency for use on prescribed fires. Weir also indicated that OPBA would look for grants to get high quality radio equipment for local burn associations and get them tuned to this frequency. This will be a project for OPBA.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:**

Weir entertained a motion to adjourn. Stevens provided a first and Inman a second. The board agreed to adjourn at approximately 2:45 PM.

MINUTES APPROVED: 1<sup>ST</sup> \_\_\_\_\_Karsen Davis\_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>ND</sup> \_\_\_\_\_Bill Inman\_\_\_\_\_

VOICE VOTE APPROVAL: X YES NO

APPROVED MINUTES SUBMITTED: \_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_ 8/20/13 \_\_\_\_\_  
M. DARREL DOMINICK DATE